

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-16 : (Canceled)

Claim 17 : (New) In a telecommunications network comprising an optical fiber cable, an optical component connected to a first point of the optical fiber cable, and an optical time domain reflectometer (OTDR) connected to a second point of the optical fiber cable operative for emitting OTDR signals along the optical fiber cable towards the optical component, a method of preventing OTDR signals from being applied to the optical component, comprising the steps of:

- a) introducing at least one optical signal into the optical fiber cable at the first point thereof;
- b) using the optical fiber cable to carry the at least one optical signal to the second point thereof; and
- c) configuring the OTDR to detect the at least one optical signal from the optical fiber cable and to prevent emission of the OTDR signals at any time during which detection of the at least one optical signal occurs.

Claim 18 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the optical component comprises an optical receiver, and in which the introducing step is performed by arranging the optical receiver to introduce the at least one optical signal into the optical fiber cable.

Claim 19 : (New) The method according to claim 18, in which the arranging step is performed by providing the optical receiver with a transmitting device, and the step of transmitting the at least one optical signal from the transmitting device into the optical fiber cable.

Claim 20 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the optical component comprises a receive erbium doped fiber amplifier (EDFA), and in which the introducing step is performed by arranging the receive EDFA to introduce the at least one optical signal into the optical fiber cable.

Claim 21 : (New) The method according to claim 20, in which the arranging step is performed by controlling isolation of an input isolator of the receive EDFA such that, in the absence of an input signal thereto, the at least one optical signal in the form of amplified spontaneous emission noise escapes from an input of the receive EDFA and is introduced into the optical fiber cable.

Claim 22 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the introducing step is performed by superimposing a plurality of optical signals onto the optical fiber cable.

Claim 23 : (New) The method according to claim 22, in which the superimposing step is performed by multiplexing the plurality of the optical signals onto the optical fiber cable.

Claim 24 : (New) The method according to claim 23, in which each optical signal comprises a pilot signal having a wavelength different from that of traffic signals transmitted along the optical fiber cable.

Claim 25 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the introducing step is performed by superimposing a plurality of optical service channel (OSC) optical signals onto the optical fiber cable.

Claim 26 : (New) The method according to claim 25, in which the superimposing step is performed by multiplexing the plurality of the OSC optical signals onto the optical fiber cable.

Claim 27 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the OTDR comprises a transmitter operated to emit the OTDR signals.

Claim 28 : (New) The method according to claim 27, and the step of disabling the OTDR transmitter to prevent emission of the OTDR signals at any time during which detection of the at least one optical signal occurs.

Claim 29 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the OTDR comprises a detector operated to detect the at least one optical signal from the optical fiber cable.

Claim 30 : (New) The method according to claim 29, in which the OTDR detector is able to detect the at least one optical signal in a wavelength range of approximately 1250 nm to approximately 1700 nm.

Claim 31 : (New) The method according to claim 29, in which the OTDR detector is used to receive echoes of the OTDR signals.

Claim 32 : (New) The method according to claim 17, in which the OTDR comprises a receiver used to receive echoes of the OTDR signals.